

## Wet Weather Woes at Stony Brook Visitor Count Drops Off

Attendance at Stony Brook State Park was heading for a record season that is until Aug. 16 "when the bottom dropped out."

That was when the rains came, said George Wyman, park manager, stated. "Had the weather not turned sour in August, it would have been a banner year," he said.

Statistics indicate that 44,720 persons visited the state facility through July, and for the first half of August, the attendance was at 30,000, said Wyman.

The period of April through Aug. 31, 1986, the attendance was 120,000. Wyman estimated the number for the current year, had everything remained normal, would have been upwards to 135,000.

Until mid-August the park did very well. "It would have been an excellent year," stated the park manager.

Wyman noted the number of campers using the local camp facilities remained about normal.

While Stony Brook was having its problems with the weather, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation was announcing that state parks "showed impressive attendance figures for the summer, with an increase of nearly one million visitors compared with the 1986 summer season."

Orin Lehman, state parks commissioner, reported, "From Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend 1987, state parks attracted 32,798,229

visitors compared with 31,830,765 in the same period in 1986."

Lehman said that 53 million visitors were recorded at state parks in the full 1986 fiscal year.

Although pools and beaches throughout the state are now closed, many state parks remain open for camping, picnics and fall foliage tours, and during the winter, many park facilities are used for cross-country skiing and other winter activities.

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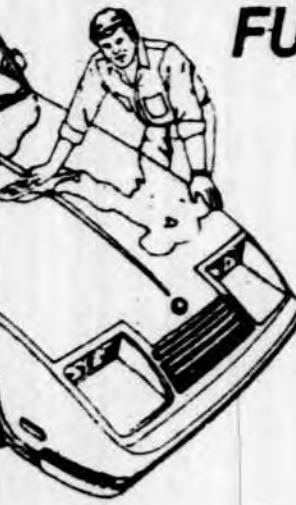
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**BIRTHDAY GIRL** — This character caricature turned up on Dansville's Main Street in recognition of Yvonne Pfuntner's recent birthday. The gag doll was the work of several of Mrs. Pfuntner's friends who felt the special day should not go unnoticed by area residents.

## Original Constitution Vital Document Well Protected

By DONALD SMITH  
National Geographic News

First, in the cool darkness 22 feet below the floor of the National Archives rotunda, a massive pair of steel doors peels back, the thick metal leaves moving at a measured pace.

Soon the contents of this nuclear-bomb-proof sanctum sanctorum come into view: the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.

Now fully exposed, the thin slabs of parchment, each sealed in its own glass-and-bronze container filled with chemically inert helium, begin a 50-second journey to the top from their 55-ton steel-and-concrete vault repository.

The only sound is the muted whir of hidden gears and motors operating the scissor jack that propels them upward.

An illusion: To an observer looking down on this stately ascent, the fading handwriting — "We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union" — seems to grow larger as the Constitution rises out of the gloom.

"I've seen them come up a number of times," whispers Archives staff member Jill Brett, peering down, "and it still gives me chills."

The venerated documents guide quietly into place in display cases, where further protection awaits in the form of two bulletproof sheets of glass. Then the guards unlock the front doors and allow the two dozen or so tourists waiting outside to file in, to pay homage to the ultimate symbols of their country.

The mechanism for raising and lowering these documents — Archives officials call them the "charter of freedom" — is only part of an elaborate system of keeping the papers accessible to the tens of thousands of visitors who come to see them every year, and at the same time preserving the papers for future generations.

"People make guesses and say charters of freedom will last for thousands of years," says Kenneth E. Harris, director of the Preservation Division of the National Archives. "I think we can rest assured that they will be around for many hundreds of years at least, considering the way they're being cared for."

Before coming to the Archives in 1952, the charters were displayed at the Library of Congress. Before that they were in the custody of the State Department.

The documents now are among 3.5 billion pieces of paper of varying importance that are under the care of the Archives, along with a trove of audio tapes, photographs, and some 9.1 million feet of motion-picture footage.

Of the Archives' annual budget of about \$97 million, about \$8 million a year is spent on preservation.

That doesn't include money spent on safeguards against viola-

tion such as occurred last October, when a man wielding a claw hammer stormed into the rotunda and punched three bullet-size holes in the top layer of glass in the Constitution display. During the ensuing commotion, a guard activated the mechanism that lowers the documents into their vault and, as planned, they immediately disappeared.

"It was the first time in the 35 years the Archives has had the charters that anyone has attacked them," says Miss Brett. "The important thing was that the system worked." Although the documents were undamaged by the attack, the Archives has since replaced the cover glass with an even stronger plate.

Thirty-five guards and intricate fire and burglar alarms keep watch over the papers. Special precautions have been taken for this year's bicentennial celebration of the signing of the Constitution Sept. 17, including erection of a steel barrier at the building's only truck entrance to prevent a terrorist attack.

"We've prepared contingency plans for just about anything that could happen," says Security Chief Larry Oberg.

This year something new has been added to the preservation effort, too: a \$3.4 million electronic camera that uses space-age technology to monitor physical changes in the documents. About the size of a king-size bed, the 6,000-pound device floats on nitrogen-filled "inner tubes" to eliminate ground vibrations from a nearby subway.

Later this month, the camera will photograph sections of each page of the charters in great detail. Each inch-square portion will be divided into more than a million separate images. These images will be stored in a computer. To detect deterioration, in subsequent years the same areas will be rephotographed and the images electronically compared.

One of the biggest problems is the loss of ink, which can flake off the parchment when a document is jostled or rubs against its protective glass covering. With careful handling, officials hope, the ink loss won't prove so severe that it will require them to break open the 35-year-old seals and correct the problem.

"I frankly don't think that is going to occur during the time that we're around," says Harris.

He concedes that no other nation, to his knowledge, goes to such trouble and expense to safeguard its historical documents. So why all the fuss here?

"They're probably the single most important artifacts in American history," Harris says. "In the United States, the culture has evolved on principle and ideal, rather than on objects and physical symbolism like some European and Asian countries. They're like our crown jewels, and we exhibit them with great pride and care."

And how does it feel to be the individual responsible for the survival of these national treasures? "Awesome," says Harris.

## Groveland Area News

MRS. THOMAS ADAMSON

PHONE 243-0824

Mrs. Edna Carney and son, Jerry, were recent overnight guests of Mr. and Mrs. James Doyle and family in Chili.

Kevin Adamson and Deborah Beck spent the weekend with his mother, Mrs. Thomas Adamson.

The Sparta First Church will have its annual turkey dinner Sunday Oct. 18, at the church.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Layton entertained Sunday at a birthday party in honor of their son, Johnathon.

Several members of the Community attended the football game in Genesee Saturday when Genesee defeated Canisteo.

Kevin Adamson, Deborah Beck of Sherrill, Mr. and Mrs. John Megelore of Genesee, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Adamson and daughter Jane, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Meyers, Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Adamson, Mr. and Mrs. Daryl Adamson, Mr. and Mrs. John Schmidt, Mr. and Mrs. David Adamson and Mrs. Thomas Adamson were in West Haverhill Saturday where they attend the Conklin-Stewart wedding and the reception held at the Avon Inn.

Mrs. Nellie Rossborough and Ronald Rossborough spent Saturday in Pennsylvania.

The Groveland Federated Parish had a successful turkey dinner at the East Groveland Methodist Church.

The Groveland Golden Angels Senior Citizens will entertain the members of the Groveland Kiwanis Club and their wives at

dinner in the Sparta First Church Saturday at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Colegrove and family were recent guests of Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Truelson and family in Avon.

### Special State Aid Goes to Teachers

Distribution of \$123,384 in state Excellence in Teaching funds granted to the Dansville Central School District was approved recently by members of the local teachers association.

Under the plan, teachers will receive from \$640 to \$1,255 this year.

The agreement means teachers with one to four years experience will receive \$1,255 apiece. Other distributions are: five to seven years experience, \$1,155; eight to 10 years, \$1,055; 11 to 13 years, \$955; and more than 13 years, \$640.

The money is in addition to the regular salaries of teachers and is not part of the salary increases negotiated in their contract with the district.

The EIT funds are being used to increase beginning teacher salaries in the district, an objective of the EIT program.

### MOON MAPPER

How did the mountains on the moon get their names? Johannes Hevelius a German astronomer, mapped the moon's surface in the mid 1600s. His name for many of the geographic sites are still in use.

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